



Arthur M Griffiths & Son Ltd

## CASE STUDY

Arthur M Griffiths and Sons Ltd (AMG) started in 1889 and is now one of the largest businesses providing local construction services in the Black Country and Wolverhampton.

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The company was a family business until four years ago when there was a management buyout. Since then, the new Managing Director, Richard Green, has focussed on growing the business and has increased turnover from approximately £9 million to £30 million. Richard has sought to develop new ideas and make the business more innovative and productive. He was keen to analyse how to make improvements to construction operations and as part of this process his core team identified which activities were most negatively influenced by the weather. The RoWeRS method evolved from this process.



## Challenge

British weather is unreliable and can be very wet in summer or winter and this can interfere with building schedules and cause delays. In the past year, AMG has developed a new construction technique - the "Reduction of Weather Risk System" or RoWeRS method. This approach utilises panelled cladding over the steel structure of a building to keep out the weather and allow building activities to take place in the dry. This means that construction projects are less likely to be delayed, they are more efficiently delivered and cost savings can be achieved. The RoWeRS method differs from modular building systems. Modular designs are better suited to large building sites and clean open spaces, however, the RoWeRS approach allows a greater degree of flexibility in construction design whilst still utilising traditional building methods. There is less emphasis on "wet" building activities particularly building using bricks.

AMG had experimented with the RoWeRS method on a number of projects and now wanted a standard set of architectural details that they could use for marketing and design purposes. AMG are builders and they do not have architects on staff so they are not in a position to create the details themselves. The architectural details could explain how the system worked and standardise design parameters. They would include, for example, detailed technical diagrams for the roof, foundations and window and door thresholds. Having a set of standard details meant that these did not need to be created by an architect every time a building was designed. This made the RoWeRS design process easier and cheaper for clients.

“ When people are really busy, if a problem looks too big then it puts people off doing anything about it”.



## Innovation Voucher Solution

After hearing about the Innovation Vouchers scheme through Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Brendan Oakley, AMG’s Business Development Director applied for a grant. After receiving a grant offer letter, Brendan brought in local architects GH Design to develop architectural details for the RoWeRS method in order that the firm could use these to produce a marketing brochure. He is clear that the firm would probably have developed the details eventually but staff were very busy and the opportunity to receive some funding towards the cost ensured that the work happened sooner.

The firm may have been able to pay for the development of the details as part of the costs of another job but they didn’t know when this might happen. Brendan was clear that the company would not have applied to a bank or any other private funder as the Managing Director “ran a tight ship” and borrowing funds was not in the company ethos.

He mentioned that they had applied for various grant funding pots in the past but the outcome was very unpredictable and their success he describes as “haphazard”.



## Impact

The architectural details have helped to take the RoWeRS approach to market. AMG has generated a number of new commissions since the details and new marketing brochure have been completed. This has had an impact on turnover as sales have increased. The company has improved its productivity and improved the skills of staff. In the medium to long term (the next 5 - 6 years) the RoWeRS system and the standards will be a key component of core business.

AMG has a £ multi million turnover but Brendan emphasised that relatively small grants can still make a difference. They can help the firm to “think outside the box” by engaging additional expertise. Small grants can also help decisions to be made faster.

The development of the architectural standards meant that a new marketing brochure was produced 12 - 18 months earlier than would otherwise have happened. Over the past few months it has been invaluable in helping to win new clients.

“ It’s easy to just bumble along, the grant provides a justification to innovate now”.

“ The grant concentrated our minds, gave us a time limit and made things happen faster”.

**AMG**

Arthur M Griffiths & Son Ltd

**RoWeRS**

Reduction of Weather Risk System

